TITLE 75

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

CHAPTER 1

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PROTECTION GENERALLY

Part 1 -- General Provisions

Part 2 -- Environmental Impact Statements

Part 3 -- Environmental Quality Council

Chapter Cross-References

Beauty of state, Preamble, Mont. Const.

Right to clean and healthful environment, Art. II, sec. 3, Mont. Const.

Duty to maintain clean and healthful environment, Art. IX, sec. 1, Mont. Const.

Agricultural chemical ground water protection, Title 80, ch. 15.

State policy of consistency and continuity in adoption and application of environmental rules, 90-1-101.

Part 1

General Provisions

Part Cross-References

Duty to notify weed management district when proposed project will disturb land, 7-22-2152.

75-1-101. Short title. Parts 1 through 3 may be cited as the "Montana Environmental Policy Act".

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6501.

Cross-References

State policy of consistency and continuity in adoption and application of environmental rules, 90-1-101.

75-1-102. Intent -- purpose. (1) The legislature, mindful of its constitutional obligations under Article II, section 3, and Article IX of the Montana constitution, has enacted the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The Montana Environmental Policy Act is procedural, and it is the legislature's intent that the requirements of parts 1 through 3 of this chapter provide for the adequate review of state actions in order to ensure that environmental attributes are fully considered.

(2) The purpose of parts 1 through 3 of this chapter is to declare a state policy that will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between humans and their environment, to protect the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation, to promote efforts that will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of humans, to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state, and to establish an environmental quality council.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6502; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 352, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 5, Ch. 361, L. 2003.

Cross-References

Right to clean and healthful environment, Art. II, sec. 3, Mont. Const.

Duty to maintain clean and healthful environment, Art. IX, sec. 1, Mont. Const.

Department of Public Service Regulation, 2-15-2601.

75-1-103. Policy. (1) The legislature, recognizing the profound impact of human activity on the interrelations of all components of the natural environment, particularly the profound influences of population growth, high-density urbanization, industrial expansion, resource exploitation, and new and expanding technological advances, recognizing the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and human development, and further recognizing that governmental regulation may unnecessarily restrict the use and enjoyment of private property, declares that it is the continuing policy of the state of Montana, in cooperation with the federal government, local governments, and other concerned public and private organizations, to use all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can coexist in productive harmony, to recognize the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation, and to fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Montanans.

(2) In order to carry out the policy set forth in parts 1 through 3, it is the continuing responsibility of the state of Montana to use all practicable means consistent with other essential considerations of state policy to improve and coordinate state plans, functions, programs, and resources so that the state may:

(a) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;

(b) ensure for all Montanans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;

(c) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;

(d) protect the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation;

(e) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our unique heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice;

(f) achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and

(g) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

(3) The legislature recognizes that each person is entitled to a healthful environment, that each person is entitled to use and enjoy that person's private property free of undue government regulation, that each person has the right to pursue life's basic necessities, and that each person has a responsibility to contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the environment. The implementation of these rights

requires the balancing of the competing interests associated with the rights by the legislature in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

History: En. Sec. 3, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6503; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 352, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 6, Ch. 361, L. 2003.

Cross-References

Right to clean and healthful environment, Art. II, sec. 3, Mont. Const.
Duty to maintain clean and healthful environment, Art. IX, sec. 1, Mont. Const.
Private Property Assessment Act, Title 2, ch. 10, part 1.
Comments of historic preservation officer, 22-3-433.
Renewable resource development, Title 90, ch. 2.

75-1-104. Specific statutory obligations unimpaired. Sections 75-1-103 and 75-1-201 do not affect the specific statutory obligations of any agency of the state to:

(1) comply with criteria or standards of environmental quality;

(2) coordinate or consult with any local government, other state agency, or federal agency; or

(3) act or refrain from acting contingent upon the recommendations or certification of any other state or federal agency.

History: En. Sec. 6, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6506; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 131, L. 2003.

75-1-105. Policies and goals supplementary. The policies and goals set forth in parts 1 through 3 are supplementary to those set forth in existing authorizations of all boards, commissions, and agencies of the state.

History: En. Sec. 7, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6507.

75-1-106. Private property protection -- ongoing programs of state government. Nothing in 75-1-102, 75-1-103, or 75-1-201 expands or diminishes private property protection afforded in the U.S. or Montana constitutions. Nothing in 75-1-102, 75-1-103, or 75-1-201 may be construed to preclude ongoing programs of state government pending the completion of any statements that may be required by 75-1-102, 75-1-103, or 75-1-201.

History: En. Sec. 4, Ch. 352, L. 1995.

75-1-107. Determination of constitutionality. In any action filed in district court invoking the court's original jurisdiction to challenge the constitutionality of a licensing or permitting decision made pursuant to Title 75 or Title 82 or activities taken pursuant to a license or permit issued under Title 75 or Title 82, the plaintiff shall first establish the unconstitutionality of the underlying statute.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 361, L. 2003.

75-1-108. Venue. A proceeding to challenge an action taken pursuant to parts 1 through 3 must be brought in the county in which the activity that is the subject of the action is proposed to occur or will occur. If an activity is proposed to occur or will occur

in more than one county, the proceeding may be brought in any of the counties in which the activity is proposed to occur or will occur.

History: En. Sec. 37, Ch. 361, L. 2003.

75-1-109 reserved.

75-1-110. Environmental rehabilitation and response account. (1) There is an environmental rehabilitation and response account in the state special revenue fund provided for in 17-2-102.

(2) There must be deposited in the account:

(a) fine and penalty money received pursuant to 75-10-1223, 82-4-311, and 82-4-424 and other funds or contributions designated for deposit to the account;

(b) unclaimed or excess reclamation bond money received pursuant to 82-4-241, 82-4-311, 82-4-424, and 82-4-426; and

(c) interest earned on the account.

(3) Money in the account is available to the department of environmental quality by appropriation and must be used to pay for:

(a) reclamation and revegetation of land affected by mining activities, research pertaining to the reclamation and revegetation of land, and the rehabilitation of water affected by mining activities;

(b) reclamation and revegetation of unreclaimed mine lands for which the department may not require reclamation by, or obtain costs of reclamation from, a legally responsible party;

(c) remediation of sites containing hazardous wastes or hazardous substances for which the department may not recover costs from a legally responsible party; or

(d) response to an imminent threat of substantial harm to the environment, to public health, or to public safety for which no funding or insufficient funding is available pursuant to 75-1-1101.

(4) Any unspent or unencumbered money in the account at the end of a fiscal year must remain in the account until spent or appropriated by the legislature.

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 338, L. 2001.

Part 2

Environmental Impact Statements

75-1-201. General directions -- environmental impact statements. (1) The legislature authorizes and directs that, to the fullest extent possible:

(a) the policies, regulations, and laws of the state must be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in parts 1 through 3;

(b) under this part, all agencies of the state, except the legislature and except as provided in subsection (2), shall:

(i) use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that will ensure:

(A) the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decisionmaking that may have an impact on the human environment; and

(B) that in any environmental review that is not subject to subsection (1)(b)(iv), when an agency considers alternatives, the alternative analysis will be in compliance with the provisions of subsections (1)(b)(iv)(C)(I) through (1)(b)(iv)(C)(III) and, if requested by the project sponsor or if determined by the agency to be necessary, subsection (1)(b)(iv)(C)(IV);

(ii) identify and develop methods and procedures that will ensure that presently unquantified environmental amenities and values may be given appropriate consideration in decisionmaking, along with economic and technical considerations;

(iii) identify and develop methods and procedures that will ensure that state government actions that may impact the human environment are evaluated for regulatory restrictions on private property, as provided in subsection (1)(b)(iv)(D);

(iv) include in each recommendation or report on proposals for projects, programs, and other major actions of state government significantly affecting the quality of the human environment a detailed statement on:

(A) the environmental impact of the proposed action;

(B) any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the proposal is implemented;

(C) alternatives to the proposed action. An analysis of any alternative included in the environmental review must comply with the following criteria:

(I) any alternative proposed must be reasonable, in that the alternative must be achievable under current technology and the alternative must be economically feasible as determined solely by the economic viability for similar projects having similar conditions and physical locations and determined without regard to the economic strength of the specific project sponsor;

(II) the agency proposing the alternative shall consult with the project sponsor regarding any proposed alternative, and the agency shall give due weight and consideration to the project sponsor's comments regarding the proposed alternative;

(III) if the project sponsor believes that an alternative is not reasonable as provided in subsection (1)(b)(iv)(C)(I), the project sponsor may request a review by the appropriate board, if any, of the agency's determination regarding the reasonableness of the alternative. The appropriate board may, at its discretion, submit an advisory recommendation to the agency regarding the issue. The agency may not charge the project sponsor for any of its activities associated with any review under this section. The period of time between the request for a review and completion of a review under this subsection may not be included for the purposes of determining compliance with the time limits established for environmental review in 75-1-208.

(IV) the agency shall complete a meaningful no-action alternative analysis. The no-action alternative analysis must include the projected beneficial and adverse environmental, social, and economic impact of the project's noncompletion.

(D) any regulatory impacts on private property rights, including whether alternatives that reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights have been analyzed. The analysis in this subsection (1)(b)(iv)(D) need not be prepared if the proposed action does not involve the regulation of private property.

(E) the relationship between local short-term uses of the human environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity;

(F) any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposed action if it is implemented;

(G) the customer fiscal impact analysis, if required by 69-2-216; and

(H) the details of the beneficial aspects of the proposed project, both short-term and long-term, and the economic advantages and disadvantages of the proposal;

(v) in accordance with the criteria set forth in subsection (1)(b)(iv)(C), study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommend courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources;

(vi) recognize the national and long-range character of environmental problems and, when consistent with the policies of the state, lend appropriate support to initiatives, resolutions, and programs designed to maximize national cooperation in anticipating and preventing a decline in the quality of the world environment;

(vii) make available to counties, municipalities, institutions, and individuals advice and information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment;

(viii) initiate and use ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects; and

(ix) assist the environmental quality council established by 5-16-101;

(c) prior to making any detailed statement as provided in subsection (1)(b)(iv), the responsible state official shall consult with and obtain the comments of any state agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved and with any local government, as defined in 7-12-1103, that may be directly impacted by the project. The responsible state official shall also consult with and obtain comments from any state agency with respect to any regulation of private property involved. Copies of the statement and the comments and views of the appropriate state, federal, and local agencies that are authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards must be made available to the governor, the environmental quality council, and the public and must accompany the proposal through the existing agency review processes.

(d) a transfer of an ownership interest in a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use or permission to act by an agency, either singly or in combination with other state agencies, does not trigger review under subsection (1)(b)(iv) if there is not a material change in terms or conditions of the entitlement or unless otherwise provided by law.

(2) The department of public service regulation, in the exercise of its regulatory authority over rates and charges of railroads, motor carriers, and public utilities, is exempt from the provisions of parts 1 through 3.

(3) (a) In any action challenging or seeking review of an agency's decision that a statement pursuant to subsection (1)(b)(iv) is not required or that the statement is inadequate, the burden of proof is on the person challenging the decision. Except as provided in subsection (3)(b), in a challenge to the adequacy of a statement, a court may not consider any issue relating to the adequacy or content of the agency's environmental review document or evidence that was not first presented to the agency for the agency's consideration prior to the agency's decision. A court may not set aside the agency's decision unless it finds that there is clear and convincing evidence that the

decision was arbitrary or capricious or not in compliance with law. A customer fiscal impact analysis pursuant to 69-2-216 or an allegation that the customer fiscal impact analysis is inadequate may not be used as the basis of any action challenging or seeking review of the agency's decision.

(b) When new, material, and significant evidence or issues relating to the adequacy or content of the agency's environmental review document are presented to the district court that had not previously been presented to the agency for its consideration, the district court shall remand the new evidence or issue relating to the adequacy or content of the agency's environmental review document back to the agency for the agency's consideration and an opportunity to modify its findings of fact and administrative decision before the district court considers the evidence or issue relating to the adequacy or content of the agency's environmental review document within the administrative record under review. Immaterial or insignificant evidence or issues relating to the adequacy or content of the agency's environmental review document may not be remanded to the agency. The district court shall review the agency's findings and decision to determine whether they are supported by substantial, credible evidence within the administrative record under review.

(4) To the extent that the requirements of subsections (1)(b)(iv)(C)(I) and (1)(b)(iv)(C)(III) are inconsistent with federal requirements, the requirements of subsections (1)(b)(iv)(C)(I) and (1)(b)(iv)(C)(III) do not apply to an environmental review that is being prepared by a state agency pursuant to this part and a federal agency pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act or to an environmental review that is being prepared by a state agency to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

(5) (a) The agency may not withhold, deny, or impose conditions on any permit or other authority to act based on parts 1 through 3 of this chapter.

(b) Nothing in this subsection (5) prevents a project sponsor and an agency from mutually developing measures that may, at the request of a project sponsor, be incorporated into a permit or other authority to act.

(c) Parts 1 through 3 of this chapter do not confer authority to an agency that is a project sponsor to modify a proposed project or action.

(6) (a) (i) A challenge to an agency action under this part may only be brought against a final agency action and may only be brought in district court or in federal court, whichever is appropriate.

(ii) Any action or proceeding challenging a final agency action alleging failure to comply with or inadequate compliance with a requirement under this part must be brought within 60 days of the action that is the subject of the challenge.

(iii) For an action taken by the board of land commissioners or the department of natural resources and conservation under Title 77, "final agency action" means the date that the board of land commissioners or the department of natural resources and conservation issues a final environmental review document under this part or the date that the board approves the action that is subject to this part, whichever is later.

(b) Any action or proceeding under subsection (6)(a)(ii) must take precedence over other cases or matters in the district court unless otherwise provided by law.

(7) The director of the agency responsible for the determination or recommendation shall endorse in writing any determination of significance made under

subsection (1)(b)(iv) or any recommendation that a determination of significance be made.

(8) A project sponsor may request a review of the significance determination or recommendation made under subsection (7) by the appropriate board, if any. The appropriate board may, at its discretion, submit an advisory recommendation to the agency regarding the issue. The period of time between the request for a review and completion of a review under this subsection may not be included for the purposes of determining compliance with the time limits established for environmental review in 75-1-208.

History: En. Sec. 4, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6504; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 391, L. 1979; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 473, L. 1987; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 566, L. 1989; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 331, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 352, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 177, Ch. 418, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 67, Ch. 545, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 223, L. 1999; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 186, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 267, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 268, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 299, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 300, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 125, L. 2003; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 131, L. 2003; amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 469, L. 2007.

Compiler's Comments

2007 Amendment: Chapter 469 inserted (1)(b)(iv)(G) referring to the customer fiscal impact analysis; in (3)(a) inserted fourth sentence providing that the agency's decision may not be challenged or reviewed based on customer fiscal impact analysis; and made minor changes in style. Amendment effective May 8, 2007.

Applicability: Section 10, Ch. 469, L. 2007, provided: "[This act] applies to applications received by the department of environmental quality on or after [the effective date of this act]." Effective May 8, 2007.

Cross-References

Citizens' right to participate satisfied if environmental impact statement filed, 2-3-104.

Statement to contain information regarding heritage properties and paleontological remains, 22-3-433.

Public Service Commission, Title 69, ch. 1, part 1.

Statement under lakeshore protection provisions required, 75-7-213.

Impact statement for facility siting, 75-20-211.

Fees for impact statements concerning water permits, 85-2-124.

Energy emergency provisions -- exclusion, 90-4-310.

75-1-202. Agency rules to prescribe fees. Each agency of state government charged with the responsibility of issuing a lease, permit, contract, license, or certificate under any provision of state law may adopt rules prescribing fees that must be paid by a person, corporation, partnership, firm, association, or other private entity when an application for a lease, permit, contract, license, or certificate will require an agency to compile an environmental impact statement as prescribed by 75-1-201 and the agency has not made the finding under 75-1-205(1)(a). An agency shall determine whether it will be necessary to compile an environmental impact statement and assess a fee as prescribed by this section within any statutory timeframe for issuance of the lease, permit, contract, license, or certificate or, if no statutory timeframe is provided, within 90 days. Except as provided in 85-2-124, the fee assessed under this section may be used

only to gather data and information necessary to compile an environmental impact statement as defined in parts 1 through 3. A fee may not be assessed if an agency intends only to file a negative declaration stating that the proposed project will not have a significant impact on the human environment.

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(1); amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 337, L. 2005.

Cross-References

Fees authorized for environmental review of subdivision plats, 76-4-105.

Fees in connection with environmental impact statement required before issuing permits to appropriate water, 85-2-124.

75-1-203. Fee schedule -- maximums. (1) In prescribing fees to be assessed against applicants for a lease, permit, contract, license, or certificate as specified in 75-1-202, an agency may adopt a fee schedule that may be adjusted depending upon the size and complexity of the proposed project. A fee may not be assessed unless the application for a lease, permit, contract, license, or certificate will result in the agency incurring expenses in excess of $2,500 to compile an environmental impact statement.

(2) The maximum fee that may be imposed by an agency may not exceed 2% of any estimated cost up to $1 million, plus 1% of any estimated cost over $1 million and up to $20 million, plus 1/2 of 1% of any estimated cost over $20 million and up to $100 million, plus 1/4 of 1% of any estimated cost over $100 million and up to $300 million, plus 1/8 of 1% of any estimated cost in excess of $300 million.

(3) If an application consists of two or more facilities, the filing fee must be based on the total estimated cost of the combined facilities. The estimated cost must be determined by the agency and the applicant at the time the application is filed.

(4) Each agency shall review and revise its rules imposing fees as authorized by this part at least every 2 years.

(5) In calculating fees under this section, the agency may not include in the estimated project cost the project sponsor's property or other interests already owned by the project sponsor at the time the application is submitted. Any fee assessed may be based only on the projected cost of acquiring all of the information and data needed for the environmental impact statement.

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(2), (7); amd. Sec. 47, Ch. 112, L. 1991; amd. Sec. 41, Ch. 349, L. 1993; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 251, L. 2001.

75-1-204. Application of administrative procedure act. In adopting rules prescribing fees as authorized by this part, an agency shall comply with the provisions of the Montana Administrative Procedure Act.

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(4).

Cross-References

Montana Administrative Procedure Act -- adoption and publication of rules, Title 2, ch. 4, part 3.

75-1-205. Collection and use of fees and costs. (1) A person who applies to a state agency for a permit, license, or other authorization that the agency determines requires preparation of an environmental impact statement is responsible for paying:

(a) the agency's costs of preparing the environmental impact statement and conducting the environmental impact statement process if the agency makes a written determination, based on material evidence identified in the determination, that there will be a significant environmental impact or a potential for a significant environmental impact. If a customer fiscal impact analysis is required under 69-2-216, the applicant shall also pay the staff and consultant costs incurred by the office of consumer counsel in preparing the analysis.

(b) a fee as provided in 75-1-202 if the agency does not make the determination provided for in subsection (1)(a).

(2) Costs payable under subsection (1) include:

(a) the costs of generating, gathering, and compiling data and information that is not available from the applicant to prepare the draft environmental impact statement, any supplemental draft environmental impact statement, and the final environmental impact statement;

(b) the costs of writing, reviewing, editing, printing, and distributing a reasonable number of copies of the draft environmental impact statement;

(c) the costs of attending meetings and hearings on the environmental impact statement, including meetings and hearings held to determine the scope of the environmental impact statement; and

(d) the costs of preparing, printing, and distributing a reasonable number of copies of any supplemental draft environmental impact statement and the final environmental impact statement, including the cost of reviewing and preparing responses to public comment.

(3) Costs payable under subsection (1) include:

(a) payments to contractors hired to work on the environmental impact statement;

(b) salaries and expenses of an agency employee who is designated as the agency's coordinator for preparation of the environmental impact statement for time spent performing the activities described in subsection (2) or for managing those activities; and

(c) travel and per diem expenses for other agency personnel for attendance at meetings and hearings on the environmental impact statement.

(4) (a) Whenever the agency makes the determination in subsection (1)(a), it shall notify the applicant of the cost of conducting the process to determine the scope of the environmental impact statement. The applicant shall pay that cost, and the agency shall then conduct the scoping process. The timeframe in 75-1-208(4)(a)(i) and any statutory timeframe for a decision on the application are tolled until the applicant pays the cost of the scoping process.

(b) If the agency decides to hire a third-party contractor to prepare the environmental impact statement, the agency shall prepare a list of no fewer than four contractors acceptable to the agency and shall provide the applicant with a copy of the list. If fewer than four acceptable contractors are available, the agency shall include all acceptable contractors on the list. The applicant shall provide the agency with a list of at

least 50% of the contractors from the agency's list. The agency shall select its contractor from the list provided by the applicant.

(c) Upon completion of the scoping process and subject to subsection (1)(d), the agency and the applicant shall negotiate an agreement for the preparation of the environmental impact statement. The agreement must provide that:

(i) the applicant shall pay the cost of the environmental impact statement as determined by the agency after consultation with the applicant. In determining the cost, the agency shall identify and consult with the applicant regarding the data and information that must be gathered and studies that must be conducted.

(ii) the agency shall prepare the environmental impact statement within a reasonable time determined by the agency after consultation with the applicant and set out in the agreement. This timeframe supersedes any timeframe in statute or rule. If the applicant and the agency cannot agree on a timeframe, the agency shall prepare the environmental impact statement within any timeframe provided by statute or rule.

(iii) the applicant shall make periodic advance payments to cover work to be performed;

(iv) the agency may order work on the environmental impact statement to stop if the applicant fails to make advance payment as required by the agreement. The time for preparation of the environmental impact statement is tolled for any period during which a stop-work order is in effect for failure to make advance payment.

(v) (A) if the agency determines that the actual cost of preparing the environmental impact statement will exceed the cost set out in the agreement or that more time is necessary to prepare the environmental impact statement, the agency shall submit proposed modifications to the agreement to the applicant;

(B) if the applicant does not agree to an extension of the time for preparation of the environmental impact statement, the agency may initiate the informal review process under subsection (4)(d). Upon completion of the informal review process, the agreement may be amended only with the consent of the applicant.

(C) if the applicant does not agree with the increased costs proposed by the agency, the applicant may refuse to agree to the modification and may also provide the agency with a written statement providing the reason that payment of the increased cost is not justified or, if applicable, the reason that a portion of the increased cost is not justified. The applicant may also request an informal review as provided in subsection (4)(d). If the applicant provides a written statement pursuant to this subsection (4)(c)(v)(C), the agreement must be amended to require the applicant to pay all undisputed increased cost and 75% of the disputed increased cost and to provide that the agency is responsible for 25% of the disputed increased cost. If the applicant does not provide the statement, the agreement must be amended to require the applicant to pay all increased costs.

(d) If the applicant does not agree with costs determined under subsection (4)(c)(i) or proposed under subsection (4)(c)(v), the applicant may initiate the informal review process pursuant to 75-1-208(3). If the applicant does not agree to a time extension proposed by the agency under subsection (4)(c)(v), the agency may initiate an informal review by an appropriate board under 75-1-208(3). The period of time for completion of the environmental impact statement provided in the agreement is tolled from the date of submission of a request for a review by the appropriate board until the

date of completion of the review by the appropriate board. However, the agency shall continue to work on preparation of the environmental impact statement during this period if the applicant has advanced money to pay for this work.

(5) All fees and costs collected under this part must be deposited in the state special revenue fund as provided in 17-2-102. All fees and costs paid pursuant to this part must be used as provided in this part. Upon completion of the necessary work, each agency shall make an accounting to the applicant of the funds expended and refund all unexpended funds without interest.

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(5); amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 277, L. 1983; amd. Sec. 2, Ch. 337, L. 2005; amd. Sec. 4, Ch. 469, L. 2007.

Compiler's Comments

2007 Amendment: Chapter 469 in (1)(a) inserted second sentence providing that an applicant pay the consumer counsel's cost in preparing customer fiscal impact analysis; and made minor changes in style. Amendment effective May 8, 2007.

Applicability: Section 10, Ch. 469, L. 2007, provided: "[This act] applies to applications received by the department of environmental quality on or after [the effective date of this act]." Effective May 8, 2007.

75-1-206. Multiple applications or combined facility. In cases where a combined facility proposed by an applicant requires action by more than one agency or multiple applications for the same facility, the governor shall designate a lead agency to collect one fee pursuant to this part, to coordinate the preparation of information required for all environmental impact statements which may be required, and to allocate and disburse the necessary funds to the other agencies which require funds for the completion of the necessary work.

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(6).

75-1-207. Major facility siting applications excepted. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), a fee as prescribed by this part may not be assessed against any person, corporation, partnership, firm, association, or other private entity filing an application for a certificate under the provisions of the Montana Major Facility Siting Act, Title 75, chapter 20.

(2) The department may require payment of costs under 75-1-205(1)(a) by a person who files a petition under 75-20-201(5).

History: En. 69-6518 by Sec. 1, Ch. 329, L. 1975; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6518(3); amd. Sec. 3, Ch. 337, L. 2005.

75-1-208. Environmental review procedure. (1) (a) Except as provided in 75-1-205(4) and subsection (1)(b) of this section, an agency shall comply with this section when completing any environmental review required under this part.

(b) To the extent that the requirements of this section are inconsistent with federal requirements, the requirements of this section do not apply to an environmental review that is being prepared jointly by a state agency pursuant to this part and a federal agency pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act or to an

environmental review that must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

(2) A project sponsor may, after providing a 30-day notice, appear before the environmental quality council at any regularly scheduled meeting to discuss issues regarding the agency's environmental review of the project. The environmental quality council shall ensure that the appropriate agency personnel are available to answer questions.

(3) If a project sponsor experiences problems in dealing with the agency or any consultant hired by the agency regarding an environmental review, the project sponsor may submit a written request to the agency director requesting a meeting to discuss the issues. The written request must sufficiently state the issues to allow the agency to prepare for the meeting. If the issues remain unresolved after the meeting with the agency director, the project sponsor may submit a written request to appear before the appropriate board, if any, to discuss the remaining issues. A written request to the appropriate board must sufficiently state the issues to allow the agency and the board to prepare for the meeting.

(4) (a) Subject to the requirements of subsection (5), to ensure a timely completion of the environmental review process, an agency is subject to the time limits listed in this subsection (4) unless other time limits are provided by law. All time limits are measured from the date the agency receives a complete application. An agency has:

(i) 60 days to complete a public scoping process, if any;

(ii) 90 days to complete an environmental review unless a detailed statement pursuant to 75-1-201(1)(b)(iv) or 75-1-205(4) is required; and

(iii) 180 days to complete a detailed statement pursuant to 75-1-201(1)(b)(iv).

(b) The period of time between the request for a review by a board and the completion of a review by a board under 75-1-201(1)(b)(iv)(C)(III) or (8) or subsection (10) of this section may not be included for the purposes of determining compliance with the time limits established for conducting an environmental review under this subsection or the time limits established for permitting in 75-2-211, 75-2-218, 75-10-922, 75-20-216, 75-20-231, 76-4-125, 82-4-122, 82-4-231, 82-4-337, and 82-4-432.

(5) An agency may extend the time limits in subsection (4) by notifying the project sponsor in writing that an extension is necessary and stating the basis for the extension. The agency may extend the time limit one time, and the extension may not exceed 50% of the original time period as listed in subsection (4). After one extension, the agency may not extend the time limit unless the agency and the project sponsor mutually agree to the extension.

(6) If the project sponsor disagrees with the need for the extension, the project sponsor may request that the appropriate board, if any, conduct a review of the agency's decision to extend the time period. The appropriate board may, at its discretion, submit an advisory recommendation to the agency regarding the issue.

(7) (a) Except as provided in subsection (7)(b), if an agency has not completed the environmental review by the expiration of the original or extended time period, the agency may not withhold a permit or other authority to act unless the agency makes a written finding that there is a likelihood that permit issuance or other approval to act would result in the violation of a statutory or regulatory requirement.

(b) Subsection (7)(a) does not apply to a permit granted under Title 75, chapter 2, or under Title 82, chapter 4, parts 1 and 2.

(8) Under this part, an agency may only request that information from the project sponsor that is relevant to the environmental review required under this part.

(9) An agency shall ensure that the notification for any public scoping process associated with an environmental review conducted by the agency is presented in an objective and neutral manner and that the notification does not speculate on the potential impacts of the project.

(10) An agency may not require the project sponsor to provide engineering designs in greater detail than that necessary to fairly evaluate the proposed project. The project sponsor may request that the appropriate board, if any, review an agency's request regarding the level of design detail information that the agency believes is necessary to conduct the environmental review. The appropriate board may, at its discretion, submit an advisory recommendation to the agency regarding the issue.

(11) An agency shall, when appropriate, consider the cumulative impacts of a proposed project. However, related future actions may only be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any agency through preimpact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluations, or permit processing procedures.

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 299, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 4, Ch. 337, L. 2005.

Cross-References

Public scoping process defined, 75-1-220.

75-1-209 through 75-1-219 reserved.

75-1-220. Definitions. For the purposes of this part, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Appropriate board" means, for administrative actions taken under this part by the:

(a) department of environmental quality, the board of environmental review, as provided for in 2-15-3502;

(b) department of fish, wildlife, and parks, the fish, wildlife, and parks commission, as provided for in 2-15-3402;

(c) department of transportation, the transportation commission, as provided for in 2-15-2502;

(d) department of natural resources and conservation for state trust land issues, the board of land commissioners, as provided for in Article X, section 4, of the Montana constitution;

(e) department of natural resources and conservation for oil and gas issues, the board of oil and gas conservation, as provided for in 2-15-3303; and

(f) department of livestock, the board of livestock, as provided for in 2-15-3102.

(2) "Complete application" means, for the purpose of complying with this part, an application for a permit, license, or other authorization that contains all data, studies, plans, information, forms, fees, and signatures required to be included with the application sufficient for the agency to approve the application under the applicable statutes and rules.

(3) "Cumulative impacts" means the collective impacts on the human environment of the proposed action when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed action by location or generic type.

(4) "Environmental review" means any environmental assessment, environmental impact statement, or other written analysis required under this part by a state agency of a proposed action to determine, examine, or document the effects and impacts of the proposed action on the quality of the human and physical environment as required under this part.

(5) "Project sponsor" means any applicant, owner, operator, agency, or other entity that is proposing an action that requires an environmental review. If the action involves state agency-initiated actions on state trust lands, the term also includes each institutional beneficiary of any trust as described in The Enabling Act of Congress (approved February 22, 1899, 25 Stat. 676), as amended, the Morrill Act of 1862 (7 U.S.C. 301 through 308), and the Morrill Act of 1890 (7 U.S.C. 321 through 328).

(6) "Public scoping process" means any process to determine the scope of an environmental review.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 267, L. 2001; en. Sec. 2, Ch. 268, L. 2001; en. Sec. 2, Ch. 299, L. 2001; en. Sec. 2, Ch. 300, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 15(3), (4), Ch. 299, L. 2001.

Part 3

Environmental Quality Council

75-1-301. Definition of council. In this part "council" means the environmental quality council provided for in 5-16-101.

History: En. by Code Commissioner, 1979.

Cross-References

Qualifications, 5-16-102.
Term of membership, 5-16-103.
Officers, 5-16-105.

75-1-302. Meetings. The council may determine the time and place of its meetings but shall meet at least once each quarter. Each member of the council is entitled to receive compensation and expenses as provided in 5-2-302. Members who are full-time salaried officers or employees of this state may not be compensated for their service as members but shall be reimbursed for their expenses.

History: En. Sec. 10, Ch. 238, L. 1971; amd. Sec. 6, Ch. 103, L. 1977; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6510.

75-1-303 through 75-1-310 reserved.

75-1-311. Examination of records of government agencies. The council shall have the authority to investigate, examine, and inspect all records, books, and files of any department, agency, commission, board, or institution of the state of Montana.

History: En. Sec. 15, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6515.

75-1-312. Hearings -- council subpoena power -- contempt proceedings. In the discharge of its duties the council shall have authority to hold hearings, administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of any papers, books, accounts, documents, and testimony, and to cause depositions of witnesses to be taken in the manner prescribed by law for taking depositions in civil actions in the district court. In case of disobedience on the part of any person to comply with any subpoena issued on behalf of the council or any committee thereof or of the refusal of any witness to testify on any matters regarding which he may be lawfully interrogated, it shall be the duty of the district court of any county or the judge thereof, on application of the council, to compel obedience by proceedings for contempt as in the case of disobedience of the requirements of a subpoena issued from such court on a refusal to testify therein.

History: En. Sec. 16, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6516.

Cross-References

Warrant of attachment or commitment for contempt, 3-1-513.

Depositions upon oral examinations, Rules 30(a) through 30(g) and 31(a) through 31(c), M.R.Civ.P. (see Title 25, ch. 20).

Subpoena -- disobedience, 26-2-104 through 26-2-107.

Criminal contempt, 45-7-309.

75-1-313. Consultation with other groups -- utilization of services. In exercising its powers, functions, and duties under parts 1 through 3, the council shall:

(1) consult with such representatives of science, industry, agriculture, labor, conservation organizations, educational institutions, local governments, and other groups as it deems advisable; and

(2) utilize, to the fullest extent possible, the services, facilities, and information (including statistical information) of public and private agencies and organizations and individuals in order that duplication of effort and expense may be avoided, thus assuring that the council's activities will not unnecessarily overlap or conflict with similar activities authorized by law and performed by established agencies.

History: En. Sec. 17, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6517.

75-1-314. Reporting requirements. (1) The departments of environmental quality, agriculture, and natural resources and conservation shall biennially report to the council the following natural resource and environmental compliance and enforcement information:

(a) the activities and efforts taking place to promote compliance assistance and education;

(b) the size and description of the regulated community and the estimated proportion of that community that is in compliance;

(c) the number, description, method of discovery, and significance of noncompliances, including those noncompliances that are pending; and

(d) a description of how the department has addressed the noncompliances identified in subsection (1)(c) and a list of the noncompliances left unresolved.

(2) When practical, reporting required in subsection (1) should include quantitative trend information.

History: En. Sec. 1, Ch. 38, L. 1997.

75-1-315 through 75-1-320 reserved.

75-1-321. Repealed. Sec. 82, Ch. 545, L. 1995.

History: En. Sec. 11, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6511.

75-1-322. Repealed. Sec. 82, Ch. 545, L. 1995.

History: En. Sec. 13, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6513.

75-1-323. Staff for environmental quality council. The legislative services division shall provide sufficient and appropriate support to the environmental quality council in order that it may carry out its statutory duties, within the limitations of legislative appropriations. The environmental quality council staff is a principal subdivision within the legislative services division. There is within the legislative services division a legislative environmental analyst. The legislative environmental analyst is the primary staff person for the environmental quality council and shall supervise staff assigned to the environmental quality council. The environmental quality council shall select the legislative environmental analyst with the concurrence of the legislative council.

History: En. Sec. 12, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6512; amd. Sec. 68, Ch. 545, L. 1995.

75-1-324. Duties of environmental quality council. The environmental quality council shall:

(1) gather timely and authoritative information concerning the conditions and trends in the quality of the environment, both current and prospective, analyze and interpret the information for the purpose of determining whether the conditions and trends are interfering or are likely to interfere with the achievement of the policy set forth in 75-1-103, and compile and submit to the governor and the legislature studies relating to the conditions and trends;

(2) review and appraise the various programs and activities of the state agencies, in the light of the policy set forth in 75-1-103, for the purpose of determining the extent to which the programs and activities are contributing to the achievement of the policy and make recommendations to the governor and the legislature with respect to the policy;

(3) develop and recommend to the governor and the legislature state policies to foster and promote the improvement of environmental quality to meet the conservation, social, economic, health, and other requirements and goals of the state;

(4) conduct investigations, studies, surveys, research, and analyses relating to ecological systems and environmental quality;

(5) document and define changes in the natural environment, including the plant and animal systems, and accumulate necessary data and other information for a

continuing analysis of these changes or trends and an interpretation of their underlying causes;

(6) make and furnish studies, reports on studies, and recommendations with respect to matters of policy and legislation as the legislature requests;

(7) analyze legislative proposals in clearly environmental areas and in other fields in which legislation might have environmental consequences and assist in preparation of reports for use by legislative committees, administrative agencies, and the public;

(8) consult with and assist legislators who are preparing environmental legislation to clarify any deficiencies or potential conflicts with an overall ecologic plan;

(9) review and evaluate operating programs in the environmental field in the several agencies to identify actual or potential conflicts, both among the activities and with a general ecologic perspective, and suggest legislation to remedy the situations; and

(10) perform the administrative rule review, draft legislation review, program evaluation, and monitoring functions of an interim committee for the following executive branch agencies and the entities attached to the agencies for administrative purposes:

(a) department of environmental quality;

(b) department of fish, wildlife, and parks; and

(c) department of natural resources and conservation.

History: En. Sec. 14, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6514; amd. Sec. 42, Ch. 349, L. 1993; amd. Sec. 69, Ch. 545, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 47, Ch. 19, L. 1999; amd. Sec. 19, Ch. 210, L. 2001; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 33, L. 2003.